

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting Wednesday, March 25, 2026

The Rev. Nick VanHorn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Rev. Lucy Strandlund gave a devotional. Those in attendance were Lucy Paynter, Betsy English, Kathy Ausen, Salem Parham, Sheldon Fort, Charlotte Broughton, Jackie Piscetelli, Ralph Womble, the Rev. Erika Takacs, Julie Williams, Victoria Bass, Tom McDowell, Grady Phillips, and Betsy Reiners.

Nick called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2026, meeting as presented. Charlotte requested the word 'from' be added on page two, paragraph two, sentence one in the Rector's report to read, *Per Charlotte, this recommendation comes from a well-resourced capable group of SPE members with solid recommendations.* Ralph made a motion to approve and Sheldon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The St. Paul's Finance Committee met on March 17, 2026, to discuss the February 2026 financial statements and the 2026 budget and St. Paul's Treasurer, Julie Williams shared some of their discussion.

Pledge income is ahead by \$165k, and this is due to a large number of prepaid pledges made at the end of 2025. Non-pledge income for 2026 is on budget.

Salary expenses are under by about \$18k but will even out over the year as staff pay raises kick in during the 2nd quarter.

Maintenance is slightly over budget but some of the expenses were funded through temporarily restricted funds. Utilities are under budget by \$14k and worship expenses are over budget by \$13k, and these overages were covered by parishioner's gifts.

Overall, income for YTD is ahead of budget by about \$148k. We do expect this to flatten out, as the prepaid pledges have all been recognized.

In other areas, the committee discussed simplifying the financial statement presentation for the vestry and parish and how that might be accomplished. Tom McDowell offered to work on an FAQ document for the parish to help explain the different groups involved in financial oversight and the responsibility of each group. This will also provide historical context for past and present financial positions.

St. Paul's Stewardship Director, Victoria Bass presented the final draft of the St. Paul's Gift Acceptance Policy. Charlotte made a motion to accept the policy as presented and Ralph seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Parish Administrator, Tom McDowell explained that the St. Paul's neon cross needs repair and Buildings and Grounds has gotten several bids. Tom asked for vestry approval to reserve up to \$12,000.00 for this repair from the Buildings and Grounds budget. Betsy E. made a motion and Lucy P. seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Lucy Strandlund asked the vestry for approval to spend up to \$2000.00 for travel, incidentals and an honorarium for retreat leader, Jane Patterson. This would come from the Lucy Paynter fund. Charlotte made a motion to approve and Salem seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Nick reported for the rector and announced Matthew Phillips will be ordained on May 31, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at St. Paul's and the parish is invited.

He reminded vestry members to mark their calendars for confirmation Sunday, April 19, when Bishop Jennifer will visit and have lunch with them after the 10:00 a.m. service.

Nick said Dixon is creating a discernment group for the future of the preschool space.

Because Erika needed to practice with the choir this evening, she was called upon to present her report before the clergy reports were scheduled on the agenda.

She introduced the vestry to Episcopal deacon, the Rev. Timothy McMahan King, who along with his family is attending St. Paul's. Tim is a vocational deacon and was recently ordained in the Diocese of New Hampshire. He will be learning about liturgy alongside our clergy and will be leading the Forsyth Jail and Prison ministry for the Winston-Salem convocation.

Erika said she and the choir will be chanting and singing the passion play at the 11:15 service this Palm Sunday. Erika wanted to vestry to know that efforts are being made to have a room ready and available during worship times for parents of young children and babies next to the acolyte vesting room.

Victoria Bass shared that the Sesquicentennial festival weekend on May 15-16-17, 2026, is coming together and a link has been sent to the parish to sign up for the lunch at the Benton Convention Center on May 17. Victoria said that Dixon will be interviewing Bishop Michael Curry at the lunch and that across the street, handicapped accessible parking is included in the price. There will be children's activities during the weekend and fun merchandise available. There is an evensong planned on Friday night with a reception to follow and tours on campus on Friday and Saturday. Transportation will be offered to Salemtowne and Arbor Acres residents and the schedule for the weekend will be published after Easter. Victoria encouraged everyone to take a look at the history wall in the chapel hallway that was installed last week.

In clergy reports, the Rev. Nick VanHorn encouraged all vestry members to attend the youth banquet on Sunday, May 3rd at 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul's.

The Rev. Lucy Strandlund said there are only 3 Sundays left of adult formation. The rescheduled retreat with Jane Patterson will take place on Saturday, April 25, and the Icon retreat is June 01-05 in the Colhoun room.

In the Sr. Warden's report, Charlotte Broughton said the returning vestry members will continue with their current liaison assignments, and that she has some openings that she will discuss with the freshman vestry class after the meeting.

In the Jr. Warden's report, Jackie Piscetelli said the new signs are being installed inside the building and the outdoor sign installation should be done by the next vestry meeting.

Tom McDowell reported for Jackie about the status of the playground and said that Buildings and Grounds are still in the planning stages regarding next steps and contactors are being interviewed.

In liaison reports, Salem Parham reported on Children's Ministries and said we had the largest attendance of children ever at the Ash Wednesday children's service. Master of Choristers and Schola, Dr. Robert Poovey has done a great job teaching songs to the children during Children's Chapel and they are all singing in worship after the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday. Holy Week passports for children and youth are available and a children's Maundy Thursday service is planned. One hundred and thirty-five activity bags (based on the number we gave away last year) have been made for children for all the Easter services.

Eighty-seven Easter baskets were made during an intergenerational event last Sunday that will be shared with several community partners.

As their spring project, the Daring Disciples made Easter baskets for four-, five- and six-year-olds.

All this school year the children have collected needed items for Ashley Elementary, and these were recently delivered to the school.

VBS is June 8-12 and volunteers are needed.

Deacon Lauren, along with Jason Franklin and Nick updated the church policy for photographing minors.

Grady Phillips reported on youth ministries and said the summer youth trip will take place outside of Blowing Rock, June 7-11.

The Lip Sync Battle deadline is April 16.

The youth will help with the Stations of the Cross-evening service on Good Friday.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.